

# OF NOTE

## ★ A/C changeover

The 377th Civil Engineers are changing from heating to cooling in base facilities through **May 9**.

All headquarters facilities, dormitories and other high-use facilities will be prioritized for the service.

Call 846-8222.

## ★ Parent, infant group

Parents with infants through 18 months old meet **every Thursday**, 10 a.m.-noon, in the Rio Grande Community Center.

Call 846-0139.

## Personnel

### ★ Official e-mail

To access official e-mail accounts from off base, subscribers must type in an address **beginning today**.

The e-mail account link on the Kirtland AFB Web site will no longer appear. To access base e-mail from off base, type <https://webmail.kirtland.af.mil> in the address section of your Internet browser.

Call 846-5926 for more information.

### ★ SARS limits travel

DoD personnel may make mission-essential only trips to China and Hong Kong because of the threat of severe acute respiratory syndrome.

All Hong Kong port visits by U.S. Navy ships are deferred until the restriction has been lifted. The travel advisory includes Singapore, Hanoi and Vietnam.

The global outbreak poses a potential risk to military personnel similar to other infectious diseases.

## ★ Thrift Savings Plan

Thrift Savings Plan accounts open season ends **June 30**.

Military members can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site at [www.dfas.mil/emss/](http://www.dfas.mil/emss/) or by completing the form TSP-U-1 at personnel, finance or family support.

Information is available for civilians at the Thrift Savings Web site: [www.tsp.gov/](http://www.tsp.gov/) or the BEST homepage at [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm) and for Air Force military members: [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift\\_savings\\_plan.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm).

All Air Force-serviced civilian employees must make their TSP contribution elections or changes through the BEST automated phone system at 800-997-2378.

Hearing impaired employees may contact BEST by calling TDD 800-382-0893.

Counselors are available weekdays, 6 a.m.-5 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. The BEST Employee Benefits Information System Web application is located at [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST\\_GRB/EBIS](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/BEST_GRB/EBIS).

## Recruiting

### ★ Volunteers

During National Volunteer Week, Kirtland AFB honors all volunteers at its annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony and Cook-out, **May 2**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Rio Grande Community Center.

### ★ Blood drives

United Blood Services conducts blood drives at Sandia National Laboratories, **every Tuesday**, 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

## ★ Vehicle decals

Kirtland AFB vehicle decals are available at Pass and Registration in the Consolidated Support Building.

Any unit doing its own registration using Security Forces Management Information Systems should place orders at 846-6429.

Individuals must have vehicle registration, proof of insurance, drivers license, identification card and an emissions test for vehicle years 1975-2001 registered out of Bernalillo County.

Call 846-6429.

## ★ European resorts closing

The war in Iraq, increased force protection and a declining dollar have forced the Army to close three European recreation centers.

The Von Steuben Hotel in Garmisch closed April 15, while the Chiemsee Lake and Park hotels are open through Labor Day, when they close permanently.

The recreation centers are open to DoD identification cardholders.



Photo by Todd Berenger

## Airman's Attic reopens

The Airman's Attic, 8351 M Avenue, is open the first and fourth Saturdays and by appointment with squadron first sergeants. To donate serviceable furniture and household items in working order and good repair, call Master Sgt. William H. Long, 846-0449. The "attic" helps Airmen who need items to begin their households or to expand their household because of the birth of a new family member.



# VA BENEFITS

## VA grants benefits to Vietnam vets with chronic leukemia

**WASHINGTON**—Based upon a recently released review of scientific studies, the Department of Veterans Affairs is extending benefits to Vietnam veterans with chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

“Evidence has emerged that exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange is associated with chronic lymphocytic leukemia,” a VA representative said.

The ruling means that veterans with chronic lymphocytic leukemia who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War don’t have to prove that illness is related to their military service to qualify for VA disability compensation.

The decision to provide compensation was based upon a recent report by the Institute of Medicine that found among scientific studies “sufficient evidence of an association” between exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War and chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

The review, conducted at VA’s request, was the latest in a series spanning the period since 1993 when the independent, non-governmental agency first published a report for VA that examined thousands of relevant scientific studies on the health effects of various substances to which American servicemembers may have been exposed in Vietnam.

VA requested the panel of experts to focus on chronic lymphocytic leukemia in their report because of veterans’ concerns that chronic lymphocytic leukemia shares some similarities with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, which the Institute of Medicine had previously connected to Agent Orange exposure.

Publication of regulations is expected in the near future. VA will publish further details, when available at [www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/).

In the meantime, veterans with questions about healthcare, compensation and survivor benefits may call 800-749-8387 for information. VA also encourages Vietnam veterans who have not done so to request a subscription to Agent Orange Review, the VA’s free newsletter that will keep them abreast of developments on this issue and other policies and scientific findings in the future.

Newsletter subscription information is available from the help line number above. Back issues and additional information about Agent Orange are available at another VA Web site at [www.va.gov/agentorange/](http://www.va.gov/agentorange/).

### American, NM flags presented to 377th Med Group

Deployed members of the 377th Medical Group supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom will be presented American and New Mexico flags in a ceremony Tuesday, 2 p.m., in

the auditorium of the Albuquerque Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus. The flags are donated by the Daughters of the American Colonists local chapter.



Photo by Todd Berenger

### Common Access Card uncommonly useful

Senior Airman Jasen Holguin, a Military Personnel Flight customer service representative, prepares a Common Access Card for Mary Roybal, an Air Force Research Laboratory contractor. All TEAM KIRTLAND computer users should make an online appointment at <https://afpki.lackland.af.mil/scheduler/kirtland/> to get a card at the Military Personnel Flight in the Consolidated Support Building. The Web site with easy-to-follow guidelines for completing the online form provides available appointment slots and appointment confirmation. Print your completed form and take it to your appointment. The new photo DOD identification card with detailed information will be used soon by everyone on Kirtland AFB using government computers. The card also will be used for facility access and travel voucher filing. It will be inserted into the Smart Card equipment on the computers of military, federal civilian employees and selected contractors. Retirees and family, who don’t use government computers, won’t need Common Access Cards and should continue using their current form of identification to enter the base.